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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DOYLE).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 24, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL F. DOYLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

### GUN AMENDMENT TO OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) for 1 minute.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. I rise today out of concern for the public lands bill that we are taking up. We will be taking up the Senate amendments to H.R. 146. I support the underlying goals of our Nation's conservation systems, but I am concerned about overreaching actions by the Federal Government negatively affecting the American public.

The original bill, S. 22, combined 170 separate measures—most of which have never received a committee hearing.

Last week, the Senate called up H.R. 146, an unrelated battlefield preservation bill, and substituted the text of S. 22. Because we have already passed an earlier version of H.R. 146, the measure can be shielded from further amendments. This is unfortunate. There will be no opportunity to amend this bill. By sidestepping a legislative process, we are not making this bill better.

Last week, there was an amendment that protects hunting and fishing, but it certainly was silent because it didn't need to be vocal at the time on the right-to-carry provision. But, on March 19, U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly single-handedly decided to block the government's common sense policy.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker, and we should do better.

### AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I rise today to highlight the critical investments in America made by this Congress and by the Obama administration through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to turn our economy around.

We are embroiled in the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Our economy remains in a recession that dates back to December, 2007. Our gross domestic product decreased 6.2 percent in the fourth quarter of last year. Housing prices have declined for 24 consecutive months. Unemployment is at a 25-year high—and rising.

More than 4.4 million Americans lost their jobs, including a staggering 651,000 jobs lost last month. In my district, one of the wealthiest in the Nation, applications for food stamps increased 79 percent over the previous year.

In the past 12 months, Americans have lost 4 years of wealth, upending the carefully planned retirement strategies for millions of our fellow Americans. Over the next 2 years, if we do nothing, as some propose, our economy and the American people will suffer an estimated \$2 trillion in lost potential, lost productivity, and lost earnings.

We know the price of inaction. The last 8 years left us a dire legacy we won't soon forget: Trillions of dollars of budget surpluses squandered; critical infrastructure repairs and improvements ignored; alternative energy research and development placed on the back burner; regulations neutered and the financial sector allowed to run amok; poverty ignored and allowed to grow; middle-class Americans saw their purchasing power decline dramatically while a privileged few saw theirs grow and soar; and millions of jobs and trillions of dollars of economic progress lost.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer afford the inaction of the last 8 years. That's why this Congress acted, in concert with President Obama, to pass the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It was a bold stroke to put people back to work and make critical investments in our Nation's infrastructure that have been so neglected in the last 8 years.

We acted to ensure the future prosperity of our country. The Recovery Act will save or create 3.5 million jobs, including 9,300 in my own district, and provide needed investment in education, energy independence, health care reform, transportation, infrastructure, and tax relief for the middle class.

While no one action we can take will instantly fix all of our economic troubles, our investments are showing progress. Thanks to the Recovery Act, shovel-ready projects throughout the Nation are breaking ground, putting people to work planning, constructing,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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and managing these projects. Highway construction projects nationwide receive \$30 billion, with an additional investment of \$10 billion in transit and rail projects.

Thanks to the Recovery Act, those firms that were in fact put out of business or had to delay work are now being put back to work and putting people back to work repairing and improving roads and bridges, building schools, modernizing street light systems and water treatment plants, and building many other needed but neglected capital projects in my district and across the Nation. These are real jobs building real projects that are helping real Americans.

In the 4 weeks since the legislation was signed into law, Mr. Speaker, \$175 billion has already been allocated, including \$77 billion for education throughout the country, \$27 billion for highways, and \$15 billion in new Medicaid funding badly needed by our States.

The economic crisis has caused shortfalls for virtually every State and local government in the Nation. Our State and municipal governments are among the country's largest economic engines, performing everyday functions that Americans rely on daily, from public safety, to public health, to local education, to public libraries.

The Recovery Act provided \$53 billion in State stabilization funding badly needed by our States that are hemorrhaging red ink right now. Specifically, the investment in education, for example, will pay immediate long-term dividends for our economy. Enhanced educational support includes \$40 billion for local school districts and \$21 billion for higher education, and will create increasing opportunities to prepare our children to enter the workforce.

In addition, our investments in education are paying off immediately by stemming the loss of tens of thousands of jobs for teachers and custodians and bus drivers and nurse's aides and teacher's aides all across school districts in the United States.

One of the primary drivers for economic recovery will be our investment in the technology field as well, Mr. Speaker. The world is changing and it's critical America stay at the forefront. In order to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, we will move towards a cleaner, greener economy. The stimulus addresses both of these areas.

The Recovery Act provided \$30 billion to transform our existing energy systems and \$8 billion in weatherization and energy efficiency funds that will create 87,000 new jobs weatherizing 2 million households across the United States.

The cost of health care continues to rise dramatically, Mr. Speaker, and it's incumbent upon us to reduce costs without harming existing coverage. The Recovery Act included almost \$20 billion to accelerate the switch to health information technology systems by doctors and hospitals to modernize

health care systems. It's estimated that this reform ultimately will yield an annual saving of \$77 billion in health care costs to average Americans all across the country.

This act is only one piece of the economic mosaic, and I know it's going to succeed.

#### TIME BOMBS TICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. We have a lot of controversies here in Washington, D.C. There's even controversy over whether some of us should be legislators or communicators. But there's one area that we all can be policymakers, come together, make the economy stronger, and improve the quality of life for all Americans.

In every congressional office there's a copy of the Congressional Quarterly Weekly. The current issue on page 656 has an article about the EPA dealing with the Pentagon pollution. I invite every Member, every legislative director, every staff member who's responsible for dealing with defense or dealing with the environment to pick up this article and read the two pages.

It illustrates a bigger issue here—not just a dustup in the last administration between EPA and the Department of Defense—but the role that we will all play with thousands of time bombs literally ticking in every State and most of our congressional districts.

It's embarrassing that we still have almost 10,000 toxic sites with unexploded ordnance and military toxin scattered in every State of the Union, and 3,449 of these sites are Superfund sites. Amazingly, 2,600 of them are formerly used defense sites that, at the current rate—these are bases that have been closed—at the current rate, it will take more than half a century to get rid of these dangerous elements and return the land to productive use.

This is not just a serious problem for every State and almost every community. First and foremost, it is a danger to our military, to their families, and to their neighbors, having these toxic and unexploded ordnance lying around. It also is a serious problem for military readiness.

One of the reasons that States and local governments are resisting the expanding training footprint that our military needs today is because we, the federal government hasn't been a very good neighbor. People don't know how long they are going to be left with a landscape that is littered with explosives and toxic substances.

Three times since I have been in Congress, we have had to pull forest firefighters out of raging flames in the forests because bombs were exploding because past military training had left shells behind. There's a subdivision in Pennsylvania on a former military site

that does not have fire service because they're afraid that the heat from a fire will explode a bomb.

This is a problem of military readiness now. It's also an opportunity—if we solve this problem—with the techniques and technology that will help us determine whether it's a 105-millimeter shell or it's a hub cab, can also be used to make our soldiers safer overseas from improvised explosive devices. It will save money in the long run because as these shells and contaminants break down and leach into the groundwater, it will be more expensive to solve the dangerous pollution in the future.

It's not just a problem of the Department of Defense and the Pentagon and administrations past and present—it's a problem for Congress. We have been missing in action. It's time for us to put a reasonable amount of money in cleaning up these Superfund sites and getting rid of the unexploded ordnance.

I don't want to read another story of where there are children, like those in San Diego, who found a bomb playing in a field behind their subdivision. It exploded killing two of them. News accounts of a bomb washing up on a beach in Florida or explosives discovered near a school are stories that we don't want to hear again.

It's past time that we own up to our responsibilities, that we solve the problem that will help military readiness today, technology that will save the lives of our servicemembers overseas, make our servicemembers at home and their families and the people who work with them safer, and meet our responsibilities to the environment. Oh, by the way. We will put tens of thousands of people to work cleaning up land and returning it to productive capacity all across America.

It's time that Congress is no longer missing in action in this serious problem of military contamination. Look at the Congressional Quarterly Weekly that is on your desk, page 656. Thank you.

#### DAY 63

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the distinguished minority leader, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, today is day 63 of the Obama administration and we are still waiting for something—anything—to create jobs and to help our economy.

The President says he wants input from the Republican side of the aisle—and we are proposing better solutions. Now it's time for Democrats to stop paying lip service to our ideas and actually work with us to start doing it.

□ 1045

During the stimulus debate, we offered a plan that would create twice as many jobs at half the cost, but the Democrats passed a bill that included hundreds of billions of wasteful Washington spending.